

News Release

U of M Extension Northwest Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development Partnership (NWRSDP) Receives Funding from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota to Transform Health

*By Itollems on Wednesday, February 12, 2014*Funding from the Center for Prevention will help the Northwest Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development Partnership (NWRSDP) engage people in improving the health of their community. NWRSDP was recently selected to receive \$25,000 in Community Engagement Innovation funding from the Center for Prevention (the Center) at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota. This support will be used to connect children and nature in Northwest Minnesota.

This project engages in the development and use of natural play areas in support of health equity and active living strategies. The NWRSDP and its partners in public health, early childhood education, youth development, parks and rec, and resource management, will use storytelling, activity mapping and design workshops to enable communities to create and utilize natural play areas.

"We are very pleased that the Center for Prevention has decided to support our initiative," said Linda Kingery, executive director of the Northwest Regional Partnership "This funding will help support our efforts to ensure that community members are helping to design and drive changes that will promote health in our communities."

Engaged and involved community members are a key component to creating a healthier Minnesota. In recognition of this, the Center awarded funding to 18 projects that will be shaped through community input and participation. The funds, which total nearly \$450,000, will be used to help organizations engage community members in authentic and culturally relevant ways. "People matter when it comes to creating community change," said Janelle Waldock, director of the Center. "We know that efforts to change community health are more sustainable and successful when the people who are most impacted by the change are involved in the process."

Information on each program and its accomplishments will be updated periodically on preventionminnesota.com. To learn more about the work in Natural Resources, Sustainable Agriculture and Local Food Systems go to <http://blog.lib.umn.edu/rsdp/northwest>.

The Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships (RSDP) gives communities in Greater Minnesota access to the University of Minnesota in order to help solve problems and take advantage of new opportunities. As a part of University of Minnesota Extension, RSDP brings together local talent and resources with University of Minnesota knowledge and seed funding to drive sustainability in four areas: agriculture and food systems, tourism and resilient communities, natural resources, and clean energy.

About the Center for Prevention

The Center for Prevention at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota delivers on Blue Cross' long-term commitment to improve the health of all Minnesotans by tackling the leading root causes of preventable disease: tobacco use, lack of physical activity and unhealthy eating. Funded through proceeds from Blue Cross' historic lawsuit against the tobacco industry, we collaborate with organizations statewide to increase health equity, transform communities and create a healthier state. Visit preventionminnesota.com for more information.

About Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota (bluecrossmn.com), with headquarters in the St. Paul suburb of Eagan, was chartered in 1933 as Minnesota's first health plan and continues to carry out its charter mission today as a health company: to promote a wider, more economical and timely availability of health services for the people of Minnesota. Blue Cross is a not-for-profit, taxable organization. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, headquartered in Chicago.

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